

## **2022 REPORT ON INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED with ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS FOR INDEPENDENT COMMISSION WALES**

This report focuses on feedback from an interview conducted on ethnic minority groups to know their opinions on the Wales government based on their experiences living in Wales, what matters to them on how Wales is governed and how they felt about the various services available. We had a sample size of 62 people from ethnic minority groups with 12 members from the Chinese in Wales Association (CIWA) and African Community Council (ACC) each and 38 participants from Race Council Cymru (RCC), which included Africans, Indians, Pakistanis, Iranian, Bangladeshi, Turkish and Ukrainians. Interpreters were available to translate the interview questions into their various languages to get better and more detailed responses. The interview was conducted in two sections, with people from the CIWA in one section and people from ACC and RCC held two sessions.

### **Race Council Cymru and African Community Council (ACC)**

We began the interview by asking the ACC and RCC participants what they felt was working well in the way Wales was governed at the moment. 11 participants mention the healthcare sector with delivery and prescription being cost-free, 6 people commended the education system of Wales and a few mentioned the local services, the sense of community, safety and security and inclusion and diversity.

Alternatively, when they were asked if there was anything that needed to change, 90% of the complaint received mentioned the healthcare, citing a number of issues like the long waiting list and GP appointments, rudeness from hospital staff, poor access to dental care and the need for more hospital staff as well as better interpreters for helplines. 40% of the participants also mentioned the transportation system of Wales and felt the bus and train services needed some improvements. A smaller percentage of 16% had concerned about the number of issues migrants and asylum seekers had to face such as housing, restriction on university courses as well as benefits and support system.

The group was then asked if they felt they had a voice and if they knew whom they could go to if, they felt they did not have a voice. Majority felt they had no voice some attributed this to language barrier and not being aware of the services available especially for the elderly, whereas others felt they had a voice but no one listened. On the contrary, 4 people felt they had a voice and were convinced there were making organizations willing to help make their voice heard.

### **The commission**

In this section, we asked group series of questions regarding the commission beginning with what they thought the priorities of the commission should be. 40% of the sample size felt equality should be the priority of the commission, 16% felt the commission needed to understand the needs and interest of the people, 14% felt they needed to include and pay more attention to the voice of young people, and of 6% of the group felt they needed to prioritize health and education, and solve NHS issues. Other proposed

priorities included women and children, ethnic minority, supporting local development, more interpreters for foreigners and more funding in Wales.

We posed another question of how Wales should be governed either by the Welsh Government or the UK government. We included questions on the strengths of the current system, what aspect they valued the most and wished to be protected. 3 people voted on the healthcare, 2 people voted on safety and education and elderly care, acting on complaints. Others felt the local authority, funding for the local community and ethnic minority was to be valued to.

We then proceeded to ask if they had any problems with the current system and suggestions on how they should be addressed and the group provided a lot of contributions. Most of the improvement suggestions centred on Healthcare as people felt the delay in hospital appointments and health care processes needed to be addressed. Others also raised concerns about the limitation cap on asylum seekers and migrants (which included limited university options, language support, employment limitations regardless of high working skills, no recourse on public funds), Transport services, and expensive childcare.

We also posed questions about the balance of power and responsibility between the UK government, Welsh government and the Local government (local council). 24% felt more power should go to the Welsh Government, 8% voted for UK government and 18% felt the Welsh local authority should have more power. When asked to elaborate on the reasons for their preference, people who preferred the UK government compared the education system, technology and sports clubs in England to Wales and said it was better in England. Others feel the local government needs more power because they know the local people better and the issues on ground. Again, others felt power should be equal in every province; the needs of the people should be considered and raised issues of not knowing their local government representatives.

The group also shared their opinions on how they felt Wales should be governed in the future. Majority felt Wales and the local council should be given more power and take care of their own resources as well as control all decisions concerning the people of Wales and the immigrants here. They felt Wales was depending too much on the UK government and needed more funds to improve the city. The group was asked to share what was most important to them on how Wales should be governed in the future. A few shared their opinion with 8 people emphasising on more job opportunities, 20-25 on healthcare, 2 on safety and 4 mentioned public transport.

We also welcomed views and proposals on how the current and future forms of governance might impact the Welsh Language. The group agreed the Welsh language is the identity of the country and the Welsh language needed to be saved and the Welsh culture respected. They proposed that the language should be mandatory in all schools and migrants and asylum seekers should be encouraged to learn. Some people also suggested an investment in local areas (e.g local tourism), the development of the Swansea airport, the opening of youth centres, as well as more business investment. Others mentioned strict dealings with racism especially in institutions and schools.

### **Chinese in Wales Association (CIWA)**

The following report was obtained from the interview conducted on the Chinese Minority group from the Chinese in Wales Association (CIWA) based on their experiences in Wales. The Interview was conducted on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2022 on a sample size of 12 participants with the major engagement focus on health,

education, and social services (housing). They were asked carefully selected questions about their experiences on these services provided by the Welsh government in comparison to services provided by the UK government.

## FINDINGS

Highlights on the responses gotten from the participants are mentioned below;

### Health

- Majority of the participants complained about the difficulties they experience with booking appointments with the GP and the long waiting list.
- There were about 3 responses with complaints about Language barrier and Language interpretation by the Language line. There were reports about unprofessionalism, inaccuracy interpretation, half or little information, arguments and rudeness by the interpreter posing a major challenge for the Chinese minority groups.
- The issue of quality control and checks on the health care system and processes.
- Unwillingness of the GP providing support services for the participant (referral to a skin specialist)
- Two of the participants had positive responses about the NHS, stating that they found the NHS supportive.

### Education

- There was a positive response about the Wales education system being supportive.
- Majority of the participants stated that the Welsh government should include the Chinese Language Option to the Welsh Education System's curriculum.
- One of the participants complained about not getting support from a school that she asked for a referral for further ADHD assessment for her son.

### Social Services

- Majority of the participants requested for more funding for the Chinese majority on Education, career, Chinese charity Organization and activities for the elderly Chinese people.
- One participant stated that the Older People Team at Chinese In Wales Association are very active.
- Issues about insufficient promotion for the local services, causing inadequate information on available services.

### Housing.

- Positive response on some of the participants living in a specially built housing for the Chinese minority in Swansea and are very satisfied.
- Some participants complained about the cost of rent being expensive and first-time buyers finding it hard to buy their first homes because they cannot afford it.

## **Responses on the Services by Welsh Government Being Generally Supportive and Attempt to Meet the Needs of the Chinese Minority Groups.**

- Some of the participants stated that the public services are of little help with no support of providing alternative solutions, and they have to get help or support from their friends.
- Further complaints about the Language barrier to help access information, with little or no alternatives available for the Chinese people that do not speak English or Welsh.
- Funding from the Welsh government for the Chinese minority requests.
- Complaints on the Health care system, on the difficulties booking appointments with the GP, and the long waiting times to see a doctor.
- Some participants are unclear about the benefits they are entitled to and can claim.
- Some participants are okay with the health care system in Wales.
- The need for support services for basic daily living for the older Chinese people was requested by some participants, like connecting to the Wi-Fi, and navigating different apps.
- The inclusion of more female lecturers in the University was pointed out by a participant.

## **Responses on Services Provided By the UK Government (Immigration & Visas)**

- Some participants were neutral and had nothing to say about this.
- A participant complained about the expensive cost of getting a visa although the process was okay.
- Complaints about the increase in local crime rate as a result of the UK government allowing 'refugees' into the Country.
- A participant complained about having issues with getting a PPR.
- A participant stated the possibility of applying for both parents to move to the UK to be able to care for them appropriately.

### **Responses On Benefits.**

- Participants pointed out Slow application process, little support in filling out benefits form.
- Restrictions on the qualification of food bank rules, and shortening of food bank operation time was also pointed out.
- A participant received benefits with claims that this service is enough for their living as a pensioner.
- A participant has not engaged with the benefits department at all, while some other participants request that the UK Government increases benefits for pensioners, as a result of the rapid rise in cost of living and energy price.

## **Responses On If The Services By The UK Government Are Generally Supportive And Whether They Attempt To Meet The Needs Of The Chinese Minority Groups.**

- Some participants feel some of their services are unfair, and that the need for support for benefits application, awareness and a solution to the language barrier would be helpful.
- Complaints about the expensive charges of visas and NHS insurance.
- Request for more funding for Chinese minority groups.

## **Responses On The Differences In How Services Run By The Welsh Government And Those Run By The UK Government Treat The Chinese Minority Groups And Their Circumstances.**

- Some participants think that the UK Government staff are not helpful, using London as an example.
- Some think that the services in Wales are generally better than that of England.
- Some participants pointed out that Job opportunities are less than other regions, and investing in the country with more job opportunities would be ideal.
- Complaints about the poor quality control of the Language lines by Welsh Govt.

## **Responses On Whether The Welsh Government Should Take Over Responsibility For More Services In Wales.**

- Majority of the respondents agreed.

## **Responses On Whether The UK Government Should Take Over Responsibility For More Services In Wales**

- Three respondents disagreed.

## **Responses On Whether Things Should Be Left Roughly As They Are**

- Four participants disagreed.
  - Some respondents in this category want the Welsh government to control immigration and benefits.
  - Also, that Wales should be given more support and funding by the UK government in important sectors.
- Two participants agreed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Participants generally were okay with the educational services by the Welsh Government, but raised major displeasure with the health care system of the NHS (difficulties booking appointments with the GP, and the long waiting periods to see a GP) in Wales and the Language barrier with no alternatives and inaccurate translators. Complaints were also made from housing but there was major emphasis on the poor healthcare system and the need for funding and support services in various sectors for the Chinese minority group.